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HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

difficult, short, and imperfect :

A

SERMON

Preached at the Parish Church

FELSTEAD in ESSEX,

On Thursday, August 30, 1744.

At the Anniversary Meeting of the Gentlemen educated at the Free-School there.

By SAMUEL HORSMANN, L.L.B.

Rector of *Purleigh*.

Published at the Request of the STEWARDS,
CLERGY, and GENTLEMEN.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. BATHURST, over-against St. Dun-
stons Church in Fleetstreet. MDCCXLIV.

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE
difficult, slow, and imperfect

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Printed for C. BATHURST, over-against St. Dun-
stan's Church in Fleetstreet. MDCCLXXV.

~~Errors and Defects in the Frame
and Texture of the Parts, I hope~~

the Importance of the Subject, ^{TO}

Consideration of Human Weakness,
John Summers, M. D.

readily palliate and excuse. In this ^{AND}

Sentiment your Father would
Anthony Thomas Abdy, Esq;

STEWARDS;

and finally according to ^{AND}

To the Clergy and Gentle-

men educated at Felstead

School.

Men, in Conduct and Behaviour, not

much unlike the ^{GENTLEMEN,}

THE following Discourse

makes its Appearance a-

mongst you, not out of

an Air of Vanity, but to shew a

sincere and honest Meaning. All

4 DEDICATION.

Errors and Defects in the Frame and Texture of the Parts, I hope, the Importance of the Subject, a Consideration of Human Weakness, your Candour and good Nature, will readily palliate and excuse. In this Sense, imitating your Father which is in Heaven, who calleth Things which are not as though they were; and kindly accepteth according to that a Man hath, not according to that he hath not.

WE are fallen into an Age of Men, in Conduct and Behaviour, not much unlike the *Gnosticks* : Who have their Heads always in the Clouds, delight themselves within the Verge of Controversy, and will allow nothing to be mysterious : But make a narrow Understanding
the

DEDICATION. 5

the Measure and *Criterion* of Divine Revelation; set up wild Conceptions of their own, in Competition with God's Wisdom, which can *neither slumber nor sleep.*

I HOPE, then, that the Imperfections of Human Knowledge, will not be thought an improper Consideration: Though I doubt not, but some may invidiously reflect, *That I have sufficiently illustrated my Subject.*

BE that as it will, whilst I know I am on the Side of Truth, I will *not fear what Man can do unto me; Will count nothing as Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

IN short (Gentlemen) I put this Sermon into your Hands, not with
a De-

6 DEDICATION.

a Design to *betray*, but assert *Human Ignorance*: To confine the Knowledge, of which our Nature is capable, within its proper Channel: To intreat you to let Perfection rest in the Resort I have given it, the Mind and Bosom of God.

THAT our Learning may be a Credit to this School, a Benefit to our Country, and, above all, may promote the true Honour and Service of God, is the most ardent Prayer of him,

Who is, with sincere Respect;

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM. HORSMANDEN.

I C O R.

~~Though the Soul of Man is of a spi-~~
~~ritual Nature, yet the Soul is imprisoned in~~
~~this contracted Prison of the Body. If~~
~~the Soul is to be freed, it must be beyond them,~~

I COR. xiii. 12.

*Now we see through a Glass dark-
ly; but then Face to Face;
Now I know in Part, but then
shall I know, even as also I am
known.*

OUR Apostle, in the Words be-
fore us, gives a true Descripti-
on of our Intellectual Capac-
ties: He shews how this Body
of Flesh impedes their Penetration; and
that we cannot see clearly, till we come
to the Region of blessed Spirits. *We walk
here by Faith, not by Sight;* we do not
really see and enjoy, but believe and ex-
pect. We must look for illuminated Un-
derstandings amongst the Felicities of Hea-
ven, where only *the Spirits of Just Men
can be made perfect.*

THOUGH

THOUGH the Soul of Man is of a spiritual Nature, yet she hath her Limits in this contracted Prison of the Body. If she should transgress and go beyond them, what can ensue but Madness and Distraction? It is certain, Knowledge is her proper Work, but herein she may strive to excel herself, and improve her Operations beyond the Sphere of her Activity. When the Strings of any Instrument of Music are scrued too high, we well know they are next to be broken.

WE are, indeed, sick of our Father Adam's Distemper. Our Thoughts are continually running after Perfection. We would be *as Gods knowing Good and Evil*: But lo, the Plague of *Egypt* is still upon us, *a Darknes that may be felt*; which must be the Condition of our Mortality, even from the Angels Anthem to the last Trump.

THEY, that inhabit the low Places of this Earth, can only command a View of that Ground which is near them; whilst he, that is exalted on the *Pinacle of the Temple*,

Temple, can see the whole Country that is about him. This is really the Difference between us and our incomprehensible God. In this World we can see no more of him, than the Bounds which are set us will give us Leave; and all that by our Wisdom we are able to discern, when the Eye thereof is clearest, is doubtful and uncertain; often depending upon Causes which may not work, or by the Intervention of some cross Accident may fail.

THOUGH we are a Composition of Soul and Body, yet who hath taken upon him sufficiently to inform us of the Union of these Two; or who hath been able to explain how Thought moves Matter, or how Matter should act upon Thought? Our Saviour, in that remarkable Conference with *Nicodemus*, concerning the new Birth, reminds him of his Ignorance, even of the common Operations of Nature; assures him, that he was as little able to give an Account of the Wind. *Thou canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.*

eth. Our Darkness comprehendeth it not. This is the Path which no Man knoweth, and the Vulture's Eye hath not seen. Job xxviii. 7.

WE must consider ourselves as *lower than the Angels*. Our Perfection then must savour of the Flesh and Blood which we carry about us. As no River can rise higher than its Fountain, so we cannot in Knowledge, above the Light afforded. Now we know little of the Causes of Things; we shall hardly see clearly; *the Scales will not fall from our Eyes*; nor can we break these Chains of Darkness, till we come to a State of Glory. This Truth our Apostle makes plain, in the Words I have chosen: *Now we see through a Glass darkly; but then Face to Face: Now I know in Part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.* Give me Leave to illustrate this Truth in the following Method.

I SHALL attempt to shew,

FIRST,

to
be

at Felstead in Essex. 11

FIRST, That, whilst we are in this World, our Knowledge of Things will be difficult, short, and imperfect. *Now we see through a Glass darkly.* Having proved this, I shall then urge,

SECONDLY, That this Consideration should make us humble and modest in our Enquiries, because our Apostle assures us, that *here we can only know in Part.*

I SHALL then argue,

THIRDLY, That, as in this World our Knowledge of Things is difficult, short, and imperfect, so, when we get to Heaven, our Faculties will be much enlarged and improved. *Then shall I know even as also I am known.*

FROM these three Particulars, I hope to draw such useful Observations, as may be proper for this Day's Solemnity.

B 2

I SHALL

I SHALL attempt to shew,

FIRST, That, whilst we are in this World, our Knowledge of Things will be difficult, short, and imperfect. *Now we see through a Glass darkly.*

THERE was one Man indeed, whose Understanding was not circumscribed within such narrow Limits as ours. Nature that is so close and penurious ; so shy of making Discoveries to us ; who, as it were, industriously concealing herself, retires to her dark Recesses ; and, like some Princes of the *East*, veils her Glories from mortal View, to give them more venerable Ideas of her Perfections, did freely communicate herself to this glorious Mortal ; who was wise in his Youth, and filled with Understanding, as with a Flood. But this great Genius was an Exception from the common Lot of our Nature. We may think we have gained a *Kingdom* in Eloquence, when we display not half *Solomon's* Happiness

pineness in cloathing and uttering our Conceptions. We cannot attend long, nor to many Things at once, but are tired with Thinking, and perplexed with Doubts; wavering and uncertain to resolve; erring in the Choice of our End; and, when that is well chosen, easily bewildered and lost in the Way.

WISDOM, in any tolerable Degree, is hard to be attained in this Tabernacle of Flesh; Perfection in it utterly to be despair'd of; but the little Knowledge, which we have either of Things or Languages, is the Daughter of Time and Industry. Who ever expected Fruit from a Branch scarcely ingrafted in the Stock? As the Bodies of Men, so even their Studies have Infancy and Growth, and, after much Time and Care, ripen gradually to the Perfection of which Human Nature is capable. There is no Accomplishing any worldly Projects or Designs without these; Things being, as it were, hidden, that they may be sought; and generally future,

ture, to exercise our Diligence and Expectation. As long as the World increases, Writing will do so too; for all Men's Conceptions will never be the same; nor are all wrought upon by the same Arguments. The End of Books is to further the Good of Mankind, either for Profit or Delight; we were made wanting and imperfect, that we might reach after something more than we have; doubtful and ignorant, that we might endeavour after useful Knowledge: What often at first looks like Madness and Delusion, will, by mature Thought, be esteemed the Exaltation of the Understanding. Truth, like the Bee in the Gum, appears, but is hidden; is seen, but with some Obscurity, that we may neither despair of finding it, nor should be over confident in Pursuit after it.

DIFFICULTY, by the Providence of God, is annexed to all Things of Worth; not to deter or extinguish, but to kindle our Industry, and put a Difference between

tween one Man and another. When Men sail in a calm Sea, we cannot distinguish between the skilful Pilot and the ignorant. When the Tempest rages, and the Sea works, then a Difference is discovered. Even the Gifts of Grace bring forth sweet Fruits, when they are watered with the Sweat of our Brows.

As Nature herself hath, with a free Hand, dispensed her Favours, so hath she withheld the best Things, that we may strive for them. All Arts and Sciences lie concealed in Things themselves. The Egyptians invented Astronomy: The Phœnicians, Letters: *Lycurgus* and *Solon*, Laws: Not as Things compacted and framed to their Hands; but with much Pains, Industry, and Labour. It is the Business of a Philosopher to trace Nature in her inward Recesses; by a deep Sight and Penetration, by observing all her Mazes and Windings, he may find Matter enough for Wonder and Astonishment: This is given to the Disquisitions of Men. Thus

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is *Wisdom* privy to the *Mysteries* of the *Knowledge* of God, and a *Lover* of his *Works*. *Epicetus* compares the Study of *Philosophy*, to the Hardship of the *Olympic Agonies*; the Understanding can never perfect its Acts, but by applying itself, and having Recourse to those Images of Things made up in the Fancy. All Knowledge in the Creature must be attended with Reasoning and Discourfing; that, is, Inferring one Thing from another; this is the constant Work and Labour of the Mind. Consider also, that the *Eastern* Eloquence is vastly different from ours in the *West*. Amongst the Ancients, the Use of *Fables* and Allegories was very frequent.

Fables

THE earliest Instance of this Sort we find, in the Book of *Judges*; where we may see, very beautifully exposed, the contemptible Meanness of *Abimelech*. Then we find *Salomon* writing by Way of Proverb; which, he tells us, is designed to give Subtlety to the Simple; to the Young Man

Man Knowledge and Discretion; to make him more easily comprehend, in his Heat of Inquisition, *the Words of the Wise, and their dark Sayings*. Did not our blessed Saviour himself write in Parables, in obscure and covered Narrations to his Disciples, to exercise the Wit and Understanding of his Hearers? *These Things, says he, have I spoken unto you in Proverbs, that is, with some Darknes and Obscurity: The Time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in Proverbs, but shew you plainly of the Father.* Indeed, we are never more taken with the Kingdom of Heaven, than when we behold it in the *Merchant's Pearl*. We are more familiarly acquainted with Christ's Offices, as a Shepherd that lays down *his Life for his Sheep*. To say the Day of Judgment cometh on a Sudden, strikes not half that Terror into us, as when we read that it shall *steal upon us as a Thief in the Night*. As this therefore is the fond Humour of Mankind; that hath been thought the su-

rest Way to Knowledge, which the *Egyptians* of old used, and the *Chinese* continue the Custom to this Day, to learn by *Hieroglyphicks*. Thus *Orpheus* represented his Mysteries in a Kind of Fable; *Pythagoras*, by Numbers and Symbols; *Plato*, by Emblems and Allegories. This Method was invented to excite our Diligence, to make the Truths, when once found out, more acceptable to the Understanding. St. *Austin* hath assigned a Reason, why we are so delighted with Metaphors and Allegories; because they are proportioned to our Senses, with which our Reason hath contracted a Familiarity.

THEREFORE, God, to accommodate his Truth to our weak Capacities, doth, as it were, embody it in earthly Expressions. In a Word, though we cannot arrive at a compleat Knowledge in this Life; yet there is no Part of it that conveys Truth to us, but should be admired and esteemed.

To

To detract from the Dignity thereof, would be an Injury to God himself; who, being that Light (says an excellent Author) which no Man can approach, hath sent out these Lights, whereof we are capable, as so many Sparks resembling the bright Fountain, from whence they rise.

THERE are indeed many Passages, in Holy Scripture, hard and difficult to be understood. The Pearl is in a far Country, and we must sell all to purchase it. We may suppose, God suffers these Obscurities to give us a Taste of those great Truths which we shall know hereafter; when we shall exchange Faith for Sight; our Reasoning for Intuition; and shall no more *see through a Glass darkly*.

I COULD exhaust more Time, in venting my Thoughts on this copious Subject, which poureth forth itself into a Sea of Matter; but as I speak Wisdom amongst them that are perfect, *To what Purpose is this Waste?* So that I shall proceed to consider:

SECONDLY, That, as our Knowledge in this World is difficult, short, and imperfect, so we should be humble and modest in our Enquiries; consider, *that here we only know in Part.*

As the Scheme of Providence, the Ways and Works of God are of too large a Compass for our weak Capacities; we should be thus wary in our Endeavours after Knowledge, not to exercise our Faculties, *in Things which are too high for us.* The Royal Psalmist, speaking of God, tells us, *That Clouds and Darknes are round about him.* The Habitation of his Throne being in Heaven, and his Discovering no more to us of his wonderful Work of Creation, than this Earth, the least Part of it: All these may instruct in that Lesson of Moses his Servant, *The secret Things belong unto the Lord our God; those that are revealed to us, and to our Children, that we*
may

may do all the Words of his Law. That Majesty is at such a Distance from us, that it is far safer to adore, than discourse of it. Let us not come too near the Mountain, lest we be struck through with a Dart. As the Case is now with us, it is more safe to be diligent in that which is plainly revealed, than, in Confidence of our Knowledge, to be drawing out Schemes, and measuring the Actions and Operations of God. In which Study, we are often more subtle than wise: Besides, we must be left to the poor and miserable Comfort of Conjecture. *As he is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth,* as the Wiseman adviseth, *let thy Words be wary and few.* Humility and Purity of Soul are the best Convoy in the Ways of Knowledge; the Word of God, the best *Light to our Feet, and Lantern to our Paths.* Our Province is Virtue, religious Life and Manners: The Science of improving the Temper, and making the Heart better. In Things which concern us to know, he is clear and open,

as

as the Day; but, where our Knowledge would be impertinent, he maketh *Darkness his Pavilion: His Ways are in the Whirlwind, and his Footsteps are not known.* We must not busy ourselves in that fruitless Study of the Book of Life; which no Man in Heaven or Earth is able to open or look into, but only *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.* Our Learning then is become inestimable, when, like a River, it pays a Tribute to the Ocean.

LET us not seek what God decreeth, but hearken to what he commandeth. What can make us wise, but that which is good? Those Virtues, Temperance, Justice, and Liberality, which are called the Labours of Wisdom. Herein consisteth the Dignity and Perfection of a Man; for the Excellency of every Thing is the Drawing near to its first Principles; as that Heat is most perfect which is most intense, and hath most of the Fire in it. This is to be wise unto Salvation, to keep our Thoughts within their allotted Sphere, and
not

not attempt to pry into the dark Orb of Futurities, those Secrets which are shut up in the Bosom of God. In these more nice than useful Disquisitions, we should be pleased to be at a Loss, and believe the Thing, when God only knows the Manner how it is; and doth not yet reveal it, because not fit for us to know, till we have a Taste of the Powers of the World to come. Our Faith is that Victory which overcometh the World; this should make *every Mountain low, the rough Places plain,* and shake all the Powers of the Grave.

KNOWLEDGE is indeed whatsoever we will make it; sometimes it is the Savour of Life unto Life, and by our ill Management may prove the Savour of Death unto Death. The Understanding may be, as the Sun in the Firmament, to lead us in the Way, that we *dash not our Foot against a Stone*, and it may be a Meteor to lead into obscure Paths and dangerous Precipices. Some, in Confidence of the Strength of it, have cloathed themselves
with

with Pride as *with a Garment*, and are not pleased with the admirable Variety of Nature, till they have found the Clue to the Mazes of her Works : But, upon the Wings of natural Endowments, have soared from the Footstool to the Throne of God, ordering and marshalling his Decrees. These are the Cords of Vanity, which seldom lose their Force until the Sleep of Death. How childish is it to acknowledge a Lord God, whose *Ways are not like our Ways*? Yet measure his Actions by the scanty Pattern of Man's Judgment. We may think, at every small Distance, the Heavens close with the Earth ; but, when we make a nearer Approach, a larger Space opens than that which we left behind us. God's Essence and Perfections are higher than the Heavens, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Therefore the Holy Things of God must be handled with
Fear

Fear and Reverence, not with Wit and Arrogance. The dangerous Effects of this appeared not only in the *green Tree*, but in Men of constant Age and great Place in the Church. It is an old Observation that the best Things corrupted prove the worst; and that pure Complexions are the most noifome, when they putrefy. This ruined the laborious *Origen*, who, prefuming too much on the Ornaments and Embellishments of Fancy, drew on his Perfon the Church's Cenfures, and on Pofterity the Lofs of his Works. Truth, which is the Secret of the Lord, cannot be compaffed with that Wit and Senfes which are our own; for God and Man would be near Neighbours, if Man's Cogitations were able to take a Survey of that everlafting Majesty. This Knowledge, fays the *Pfalmift*, *is too excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.*

LET us then fhut up our Mouths in Silence for ever; defcend from God, into the Valley of our own Imperfections, and
D bring

bring all our Thoughts under the Sceptre of his Discipline. The sure Way to enjoy the Sun, is not to live in his Sphere. Let us take the Wings of a Dove, Humility and Conformity to our Maker, then flee away, and be at Rest. For to whom hath the Root of Wisdom been revealed? Or who hath known her wise Counsels? There is one wise and greatly to be feared, the Lord sitting upon his Throne. Let Man remain at his Foot-stool, with all his Laurels of Learning bowing before him.

THUS I am arrived at my **THIRD** Particular:

To consider, from the Difficulty, Shortness, and Imperfection of our Knowledge in this World, that, when we get to Heaven, our Faculties will be much enlarged and improved: Then shall I know even as also I am known.

IN this Discourse, I shall not pretend to give a perfect Map of the Heavenly State:

Which

Which would be a plain Confutation of the Doctrine, I have been now advancing. This is a Task more proper for an Angel or glorified Spirit. So that I shall not trust to the Star of Reason and Learning, for that which I shall advance upon this Subject; but shall implicitly follow the sure Guide of Holy Scripture; which tells us, that, when Mortality shall be swallowed up of Life, we shall no more behold the Face of God, through these dark Mediums of Flesh and Blood, which now eclipse the blessed Sight of him. This is our Apostle's Meaning in the Words of my Text; he distinguisheth the Knowledge of this Life, as taken in this complex Sense, and of the Life to come; that now we *see in a Glass*, which is continually fullied by the Breathing of our Animal Fancies upon it, *darkly*, but then we shall see Face to Face. Now, says he, *are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as*

he is. Moses besought the Lord to see his Glory, *Exodus xxxiii. 18*; he received this Answer: No Man can see my Face, and live: And, when that Glory filled the Tabernacle, *Moses* could not enter into it. When our Apostle was caught up into the third Heaven, he was so transported with his Change, that, whether he was in, or out of the Body, he could not tell. And we know that he had the Mantle of *Elijah*, the Power of working Miracles; we only the ordinary Assistances of God's Spirit: But, after Death, we shall be prepared for it. The Children of the Resurrection shall be like the Angels, and the *Angels* always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven. Now we only know in Part, behold rather the Images, than the Things themselves, and those but darkly and in a Cloud. But then we shall see Face to Face, behold God so clearly that we shall know him, as he knows us. We shall then understand the Nature of God, the Mysteries of his Providence, and the Felicities of
Heaven

Heaven, of which now we have an obfcure Notion. That, which is full and perfect, is referved for another Life and another Condition : When *our Corruptible fhall have put on Incorruption, and this Mortal fhall have put on Immortality.* The bleffed Angels are far more enlightened than we are ; they can apprehend more at one fingle View, than we can do in Volumes of Difcourfe, and tedious long Trains of Deduction. But when we fhall be made perfect in Righteoufnefs, be admitted into God's glorious Prefence, then fhall we be fit for Angels, and God himfelf, to look upon. Our Souls fhall be highly exalted in all the Parts and Faculties thereof ; the Underftanding raifed to the utmoft Capacity, and the Fear of Death fwallowed up in Victory. Our Vifion then fhall be without Rapture, and in a perfect Calm ; we fhall underftand our own Bleffednefs ; we fhall fee, know what we fee, and love what we know and admire to all Eternity : We fhall not hunger and thirft after Knowledge in
vain

vain any more, but the Veil shall be taken off from all Mysteries. *The Lamb which is in the Midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them unto Fountains of living Water.* Rev. vii. 17.

I HAVE now finished my utmost Proposal on this Subject. Nothing remains, but to draw, from the foregoing Particulars, such useful Observations as (I hope) may be thought proper for this Day's Solemnity.

So many elaborate Discourses (indeed) have been composed on these annual Appointments, that my Province is like that of *Ruth*, only to glean after their Sheaves. Many have been copious in the Praise of Learning, whilst I have been forced, in some Measure, to dwell on the Defects and audacious Attempts of it. By which Method, I hope, in your Judgments, I have not lessened its Dignity or Use, but have plainly pointed out the Way, in which *she is justified of all her Children*. But if, in this Undertaking, I can shew a proper

proper Zeal for the Prerogative of that great God, at whose Altar I have the Honour to serve; can discover an Endeavour to protect it from the saucy Inroachments of bold Minds, and may be the least Instrument in exciting you (my Friends) *to go and do likewise*; I shall think my Time hath been well employed.

KNOWLEDGE yields great Variety of agreeable Entertainments; like the *Manna* in the Wilderness, it adapts itself to every Taste. If we make a proper Use of it, this will carry us through the gloomy Shades of this World, into the Regions of eternal Light.

THIS Place hath afforded a happy Opportunity to most of this Audience of improving and bettering the Understanding. We may here walk up and down as in a Garden of Spices, and suck a Divine Sweetness out of every Flower: Education, we may say, is the *Potter's Hand, which forms Men into Vessels of Honour or Dishonour*: Makes them serviceable to Society or the

Pest

Pest of it : It is as a two-edged Sword, which cuts both Ways, either for the Good or Bad. If Learning is employed to protect and defend injured Innocence, to throw Truth into Day-Light, it is a useful and noble Accomplishment. Then *Wisdom excelleth Folly, as much as Light excelleth Darknes*; but, when it falls to the Share of a vicious Man, I pity the Community he lives in. Then will openly be published such infamous Performances as those that follow : *Oracles of Reason. Christianity as old as the Creation. Private Vices, public Benefits. A true Gospel of Jesus Christ asserted.* Even the most sovereign Medicine becomes mortiferous, if not applied with due Care and Regimen.

WE all labour under Infirmities not only of Body but Soul ; there are Circumstances which require the beautiful Hand of our learned Abilities ; if it is an Act of Charity to cloath the Body, much more to warm and cover the Nakedness of a Soul. And it is the easiest Method of doing

doing Good, which, like the natural Charity of the Sun, illuminates others without obscuring itself.

WITHOUT Doubt, Classical Learning is of great Use to us in our Divine Speculations. There are several Rays of Truth to be met with in *Homer*, relating to the Supreme Being. But, whilst he endeavours to mention a Deity without a right Information, he was forced to take him from that Image which he discovered in Man; like one dazzled with the *Sun* in the Heavens would view him as reflected in a River. This Advantage we may certainly reap, from our Perusal and Study of *Heathen* Authors; by those Gleams of Light, discovered in the *Pagans*, we may wound them with Arrows fairly drawn out of their own Quiver. It is certain then, that the very Candidates for Sacred Theology may, with much Profit, pry into the Writings of the *Pagans*; for there they will find the Footsteps of many Divine Verities: That

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Athens was indebted to *Jerusalem*, *Parnassus* to *Sinai*, and *Helicon* to *Jordan*.

AND let us esteem the Arts, as Things which may be of great Use to the Confutation of *Heathens*, as also a Help to the Contemplation of Divine Mysteries. They fit the Vessel for the Reception of more precious Liquor, sublimating the Understanding, and so disposing it to apprehend those higher Things contained in the Scriptures. Thus Histories make Men wise; Poets, witty; the *Mathematicks*, subtle; Natural Philosophy, deep, moral, and grave; *Logic* and *Rhetoric*, able to contend and dispute with our Adversaries.

BUT the *Holy Scriptures*, above all Authors, demand our Admiration. They abound with the choicest Schemes of Speech, the greatest Ornaments of Language which *Greece* or *Rome* were famous for. If we would apply our Time to the careful Perusal of these *Treasures*, they will not only make us wise unto Salvation; but even in this World be an Ornament of Grace unto
thy

thy Head, and Chains about thy Neck. This Wisdom is more beautiful than the Sun, beyond all the Order of the Stars; compared with the Light, it is found before it. These, like *Ariadne's Clue*, will safely conduct us through all the Windings of the Labyrinth: The Light that cometh from them never goeth out. When the Sun and Moon shall be darkened, and the Stars shall withdraw their Shining; when all the Things of Nature shall confess their Ashes, these will follow us into our eternal Mansions, either to acquit or condemn us. As the Time must come (my Brethren) when all other Books, however recommended for polite Learning and Subtlety of Discourse, shall be brought forth and burnt before all Men, it is of more Importance to make this Sacred Book our Delight and Study, than the best of all the *Greek and Roman Orators*; there you may exercise your Minds to Edification and Advantage, if you carefully treasure up its Instructions in the Library of your Hearts. The Word of God

most High is the Fountain of Wisdom, says the Son of Sirach, and her Ways are everlasting Commandments.

IT is open to our Observation that some, who imbibed their Principles in this Seminary of Learning, have shined in Church and State as Stars of the greatest Magnitude. * One especially, now with God, did warmly reflect a Lustre on this Society; who, when he put on the Robe of Honour and was cloathed in the Perfection of Beauty, by his eminent Learning tempered with a profound Piety, made the *Garment of Righteousness* honourable. But I must wave this Subject, for *Alexander's* Picture requires the Pencil of *Apelles*; his own Works praise him in the *Gates*, and by them, being dead, he yet speaketh.

LASTLY, Public Schools have always been esteemed amongst civilized Nations as the principal Prop and Support of the State. In them the Priests, Judges, and Magis-

* The late Lord Chief Baron *Comyns*,

trates are bred. *They* therefore, that have the Care of them, most highly merit of the Community. *Plutarch* tells us of a Voice frozen in the midst of a River which became audible by the Thaw, and applies this Fancy to Moral Precepts taught in Youth but actuated by Age.

ALEXANDER used to say, that he ought to give as great Thanks to *Aristotle* his Master, as to King *Philip* his Father; of him indeed he took the Occasion to live, of the other the Reason and Way to live well. In Consideration really of their Use and Excellency, we have great Reason to esteem them *highly in Love for their Work Sake*; to think of them in these pathetic Words of *Elisha*: *My Father, my Father, the Chariot of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof. What they sow in Tears ye shall reap in Joy*; and every one in the *Harvest of the World shall bring his Sheaves with him*, or, according to the *Psalmist's* Expression in another Place, *thy loving Correction shall make me great*.

LET

LET us all then, out of a pious Gratitude to this particular Place of our Education, in the Words of the same Author conclude thus: *For my Brethren and Companions Sake, I will wish thee Prosperity; for the Sake of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee Good.*

LET us wish that these gracious Beginnings suddenly dry not up as the Morning Dew, but may prosper and grow as the Trees of Lign-Aloes, which the Lord hath planted.

GOD grant, my Brethren and School-fellows, that Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length and Depth, and Height; and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the Fulness of God.

Now

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal,
Invisible, *the only Wise God*, be af-
cribed all Honour, Glory, and Praise
for evermore.

FINIS



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Now to be had of the
Invisible God, be at



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